

THE CORRESPONDENT.

MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PREVALEBIT.

No. 25.

NEW YORK, JANUARY 12, 1828.

VOL. 2.

CORRESPONDENCE.

IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

Mr. Editor—In the revolution to acquire mental freedom, we ought to select such parts of our old institutions as are useful; and not, in our zeal to destroy the evil of priestcraft, throw away that which is really valuable in life. Some well written essays have appeared in the *Correspondent*, endeavoring to do away the belief in the immortality of the soul, which I cannot unite with, because I am not able to see the benefit that will arise to society if the opinion should be established. Happiness is the sole object or end of all human exertions; and to be happy, and continue so, is a desire implanted in us by the author of our existence. This idea was never given us by the priests, for we feel it and know it by our consciousness; and it is not wonderful that we should desire futurity, for futurity is nothing but protracted existence; and when we recollect that immortal happiness is a portion the priests have set apart for themselves, it is good reason why we should not destroy it, for depend upon it they are good judges of good things. They have practised selecting what is desirable to have and enjoy; and if there was any alloy in this, they would have long ago made the discovery. There cannot be a better general rule made in breaking down priestcraft (that most detestable contrivance of all human invention) than to preserve all such parts as they have selected for their own dear selves—provided this violates no moral obligation. As for hell in a future life, every body hates it, and I want it destroyed root and branch, and fire used for steam and other purposes; for nothing but the pure essence of religious fanaticism could ever have invented such a roaster as the priests tell us it is, who are the only class of people that pretend to have a knowledge of its internal properties.

It may be said, that there are no reasons to found a belief of the immortality of the soul upon. To this I answer, that the belief is already founded, and all we have to do is to let it alone. It will then be ready for the use of those who can draw resources from it: for it cannot be urged in favor of destroying the belief "that it is better in all cases to know the truth;" because those who endeavor to establish the disbelief are as ignorant of what the truth is on the subject as those who advocate it.

If the belief in future happiness has an injurious effect on society, it may be right to endeavor to eradicate it; but this, I apprehend, is not the fact. The idea of a redeemer, who has power to reward and punish beyond the grave, is a very injurious doctrine. With such a long credit, mankind have habituated themselves to draw largely on the stock of

mercy and redemption, and, generally, harbored the opinion that they themselves would eventually be part of the favored few; for the power of this imaginary quality of redemption has been considered equal to the salvation of any man, without regard to the enormity of his crimes. Thus persons are induced to abandon the true means of salvation (which is a daily practise of good and benevolent actions) for the idle tales of ignorant and designing priests. But a belief in future happiness, embracing the present moment, and extending to infinity of duration, is founded on the principles of our nature, and is a rational resource of enjoyment when the comforts and pleasures of this life are passing away. It is particularly calculated to sooth the minds of those who are worn down by poverty and affliction in the last stages of existence.

As for everlasting punishment, it is not only repugnant to every feeling of humanity, but it is inconsistent with the laws of Nature. Punishment that neither bears proportion to the crime, nor has any object of reformation in view, is vengeance; and here is a sentence of infinite duration for a finite crime: consequently everlasting punishment is eternal vengeance; and, therefore, I do not believe the divine nature had any thing to do with dividing the sheep from the goats, as Jesus supposed. Hate is finite; consequently not eternal: so I infer there can be no everlasting punishment. Love is immortal, being an attribute of the deity; consequently eternal: hence I infer there is a state of everlasting happiness.

If happiness is the sole object of man's pursuit, if the sum total of it is lessened by doing away this belief, and if reason be a faculty given to man for the purpose of making him happy, does it not follow that every argument tending to do away with this belief is unreasonable. This may seem a brief manner of coming to a conclusion; but some point must be established in every argument; and if reason is not made subservient to our happiness, it is certainly worse than useless, and may in time be turned into an engine of oppression, as revelation is at present by designing priests. Z.

Mr. Editor—Inclosed is a copy of a letter from an aged gentleman, to his friend in this county, who has lately been very attentive to Mr. Phinney, the noted religious exciter. If you think proper to print it, it is at your service.

JUVAMOR.

Hudson, December 23, 1827.

From age, infirmity, and pain I perceive I am ere long to rest with my fathers, released from every burthen and pain, which is to me a comfortable consideration. Of a future life, I find no evidence, any more than did Moses and the prophets, who never mentioned it; nor more than did Job, David, and Solomon, who flatly denied a belief in it, as did also the Jews in Jesus's time, excepting their higher orders, the scribes and pharisees. But, contrary to my expectation, if I am to be called to an account before a universal and just father and judge merely for my conduct to my fellow creatures, as Jesus puts the case in his parable of the sheep and the goats, I think I shall be found to have done more good than harm: so there is a balance in my favor. To the father and judge I have never wished or done any harm; so that his justice will not move

him to do any harm to me. If he is the all creating, all knowing, and all managing sovereign, then I have never done any thing against his will; for who can resist or evade his will? In that case, all my faults and all worldly evils are in the range of his general system, and his eternal and fruitless vengeance or revenge will not, in justice, be wreaked on my feeble and passive head.

These are my reasoning conclusions after sixty years diligent reading, hearing, and impartially pondering, over and over, all that has been brought forward in opposition to them; all which opposition clearly appears to me to be a tissue of mystified sophistry, perplexing the subject, cavelling, explaining away the meaning of words, and driving people at last to deny the force of plain sense and reason, which are our only guides, and the habitual disrespect to which must debase and viciate the mind.

I have sought, in vain, for any ground of belief in what is called divine revelations. They have been announced as made to every people, savage or civilized; to obscure enthusiasts of every sect, and to many a half deranged object of pity in various ages and countries. They all contradict each other; while each one of them is ridiculously self contradictory in the eye of reason, whose inquiring test they all equally abhor. When thus braced and forearmed against all reasoning and scrutinizing inquiry, shakers and Mahometans can as well as any maintain and perpetuate their absurd dogmas. A shaker said to a methodist once in my hearing, "You think your religion is right, but we do know by revelation from God that ours is right;" and he was as sincere in it as are the martyrs to Jaggernaut in India, or as are our travelling excitors here, who, finding cool reason a barrier to their progress in making proselytes, adroitly manage to raise in assemblages a religious zeal and terror bordering on phrenzy, which, when followed up, will spread like an epidemic fever—overtop reason and subdue it by its extravagant agitation, seemingly supernatural. This has been well exemplified by your neighbors the shakers, and has shown that incoherent dogmas may, in these paroxysms, abstracted from all reason, be riveted indelibly on the mind with a fanatic flame, frequently leading to various grades of insanity. Nor is this mode of religious excitement unpractised among the wild savages and Mahometans, as stated by Carver, Hearne, De Tott, and others.

I hope that ——— and you will give these remarks more than one perusal; and that, whatever you may think of my doubting a future life, you will examine well the foundation of other doctrinal points in your creed. Read and scrutinize the Calvinistic confession of faith and the Bible, and consider whether it is credible that a just father and god made our first parents by his unerring skill, soul and body, just as he would have them to be, placing them in the garden so simple as not to know their being naked; hung in their reach a knowledge giving fruit, "pleasant to the eye and appearing good for food;" then, fearing they would get knowledge by eating it, made with them a covenant of abstinence, as might be done with children of three years old, knowing that they would break it! and who, when a talking serpent that he had made had tempted them and they had eaten of it and acquired knowledge, vindictively

fixed on them and their posterity a total depravity of mind, and a curse of eternal vengeance, excepting some of them, who, after thousands of years, were to be purified by the slaughter of a holy and innocent redeemer! And if you can find evidence of all this, I beseech you to let me have this evidence, that I may be also convinced, before I depart under a delusion. But if you deem it to be an allegory, with, probably, some hidden moral, as I do, then you are totally adrift from essential points of modern orthodoxy; for on the literal belief of this transgression, and the penal sentence since said to have been passed on it, hang all the New Testament doctrines of atonement. If there was no such fall and penal sentence, then there needed no redeemer—no ransom—no Adam.

This fable, or allegory from dark and fabulous ages, as it was written, was in character in ascribing the seductive words of the speaking snake to his brutal cunning, without any mention of Satanic influence. But, by that influence having since been foisted into it, with the realizing of the fable, and giving an unwarrantable stretch to the fall and its awful penalty, the hook has been formed and driven in, whereon Paul and other system makers have hung their heterogeneous creeds, blended with mythological tenets and rites of the Greeks and orientals beyond the sanction of the old Bible or of Jesus, though now revered and prevalent. But read, in Genesis, 3d chapter, 17th, 18th, and 19th verses, the whole extent of Adam's sentence of condemnation, and the tenure and termination of his existence.

THE TRINITY IN UNITY.

Mr. Editor—It has often been remarked, that every system of religion is only an imperfect description of some of the operations of Nature. This appears to be the case with the doctrine of three persons united in one. The trinity in unity has ever been an object of ridicule, and a stumbling block to the unbeliever; and though admitted to be true by the Christian world, it is a doctrine which, hitherto, they have never been able to support by any analogous circumstance in the works of Nature.

I have, for several years past, thought of communicating this important business to the public; nevertheless, seeing presumptive assertions received the same as proof, I have remained silent. But now, that challenges for natural proof are put forth from every quarter on one side, while a perfect silence subsists on the other, my disposition is altered. I therefore put them in possession of a fact, which may encourage the trinitarians to resume the use of their tongues again, lest peradventure it should be said they have given up the point.

The word *God* is very properly used as a representative of an invisible power existing in the elements in its threefold state, namely, *water*, *ice*, and *snow*, which are in themselves *all* water. Thus, in speaking of the godhead, it is said, that God is God, his son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, and yet there are not *three* gods, but *one* god. So likewise in speaking of this element, I say, that water is water, ice is water, and snow is water; and yet there are not *three* waters, but

one water ; or, in this way, water is an element, and snow is an element ; and yet there are not *three* elements, but *one* element.

It is worthy of remark, that *water* is the element of which man, beast, and every vegetable are wholly composed ; and is therefore a most perfect representation of the three persons in unity, in its natural operations. Water represents the Father, by and of which all things in the animal and vegetable world are made ; ice represents the Son, of the same nature as the Father ; and snow represents the Holy Ghost, proceeding from, and of a substance between, the Father and the Son, or the water and the ice, and descends upon the sons of man as light and as harmless as a dove. The Son and the Holy Ghost, or the ice and the snow, vanish, ghost like ; but the Father, or the water, is every where, and is with us always. Here then is the exposition, and the only complete exposition that has been found in Nature, for this, hitherto, most mysterious of all figures ; and which goes to show that the doctrine of the trinity, like most other religious tenets, had its origin in a corrupt version of the doctrine of Nature.

CANDID.

JOVE AND THE SINNERS.

S. O Jove ! we wretched mortals humble ourselves before thee. We beseech thee, O Jove ! to pity and befriend us.

J. I do not like your mean flatteries and fawning. You must choose some other phrases, or some other deity.

S. O Jove ! we prostrate ourselves before thee. We acknowledge thee to be the Lord ! and beg leave to praise thee.

J. But I neither need nor desire your praises. Is this your professed humility—to suppose I can be delighted with *your* praises ? What palpable affectation, pride, and self flattery is this ?

S. We magnify thee, O Jove !

J. *Magnify* me ! How can you magnify me, you impudent fools ? And what liars, too, when, in fact, all your endeavors do but humanize and lessen me.

S. To show forth our gratitude and thy glory, we praise thee, O Jove !

J. I thought so ! I thought it was to blazen forth some of your own rare and exemplary virtues, under the pretence of showing forth my glory. Know, silly mortals, that what I give, I give freely. You would persuade me, that being afraid of incurring a debt with me, you would recompense me in glory. What conceit ! This vain commodity of glory must surely be of great value amongst weak mortals, when they seek to bribe with it even the immortal gods ! Have you then so mean an opinion of deity, as to think I cannot perform a generous act without a return of glory ? Or would you rob me of the greatest glory, which is to do good, without desiring any return—even of praise ? Low minded, perverting mortals—utterly ignorant, as you are, of the higher degrees of goodness—you worship your own vices and weaknesses, under the self delusive pretext of worshipping Jupiter ; and think to persuade him, who is not susceptible of persuasion, that your gross self flattery is real humility. Away with such piety. B.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JANUARY 12, 1828.

LECTURES DELIVERED AT THE FREE PRESS ASSOCIATION.

On the Inconsistencies, Absurdities, and Contradictions of the Bible. By the Secretary.

LECTURE TWELFTH.

In my last lecture, I pointed out the inconsistencies and absurdities of the story of the rainbow, and showed that the reasons assigned for placing it in the clouds were unscientific, and opposed to the perfections which are believed to belong to the character of deity. In the 11th chapter of Genesis, we have the history of a marvellous project about building a tower; which, according to the text, the projectors intended should reach to heaven. The story is thus narrated:

“And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build a city, and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth; and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.”

The first remark which occurs on perusing this passage is, that although the language which it is said was then universal is alluded to no less than four times, and although the Almighty is represented as having descended from heaven for the express purpose of confounding that language, we are not told what it was—whether it was Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Chinese, Welsh, English, Dutch, French, Irish, or Scotch. To us it would have been of little consequence, perhaps, what this pretended universal language or speech was; though if only a hint had been given on the subject, (and a single hint would have been sufficient,) it might have saved the labor of the literati, and the immense quantity of paper, pens, and ink, which have been expended in endeavoring, though without effect, to discover the secret. But in this, as well as in most other cases, it does not seem to have been the intention of the Bible writers to communicate any thing which might gratify the natural curiosity of man. Their style is ambiguous and confused; they content themselves with obscure vague assertions, as to facts which required the most satisfactory proofs, and the clearest elucidations, in order to entitle them to the credit of rational beings. The truth is, these writers, who had the presumption to

pretend to divine inspiration, were totally ignorant of the principles of science—of those eternal and immutable laws by which the universe is governed. In addition to the evidence which I have brought forward of this, we have in the text now before us a striking and indisputable confirmation of their having been utterly unacquainted with astronomy.

It is said that the people who inhabited the earth at the time spoken of purposed to build "a tower *whose top may reach to heaven.*" According to this statement, the author of Genesis believed the world to be *flat*, and a fixture; an opinion prevailing for many ages among all nations of whom we have any authentic records, except the Chaldeans. The Jews, in particular, were so dull and so ignorant as to admit of several heavens. The first they called the air—the second the firmament, to which the stars were fastened. This last was solid and of ice, and supported the upper waters, which, at the time of the deluge, broke through and overwhelmed the world. Over this firmament was the third heaven, to which Paul pretended he was caught up by God, though he could not tell whether he was dead or alive, sleeping or awake, drunk or sober, when this marvellous transmission took place. This third, or Paul heaven, was believed to be a kind of demi-arch encircling the earth. The Jews had no conception of the sun moving around our globe. When it got to the west, they fancied that it returned by some unknown path to the east, or came back during the night. This opinion admitted of no antipodes, and was entertained long after the introduction of Christianity, on which, notwithstanding, its professors *modestly* assure us that all our present knowledge of the arts and sciences was originally founded.

The idea of building a tower to reach to heaven has been admirably ridiculed by Palmer and other modern writers. It has been asked to what point in the heavens the builders of this tower intended to go? and by what means they were to get there? If to the moon, as that planet is 240,000 miles distant from the earth, it would take a builder, going at the rate of four miles an hour, night and day, without either sleep or refreshment, seven years to reach the destined point with one load of building materials. The distance from the earth to the sun is 95 millions of miles. This would take him, at four miles an hour night and day, near 3000 years to carry one load of lime! But if we go to the first of the fixed stars, we shall find this calculated at 1,710,000 millions of miles from the earth. At the above rate, it would take a builder about 48 millions of years to reach it. Suppose we take thirty years to a generation, and suppose all the children to meet with no hindrance on the journey, it would take about 1,600,000 generations to reach the first fixed star.

If they had made the foundation of Babel one fourth of a square mile in circumference, and made all the earth into bricks and lime—when they had used the whole earth for materials, and left poor Babel nothing to stand upon, they would have been little more than half way to the first fixed star; and the next fixed star is supposed to be as far behind the first as the first is from the earth. The earth travels in its orbit at the rate of 68,000 miles an hour, independent of its turning around on its own axis every twenty-four hours. This motion at the equator is 1038 miles an hour. The motion first mentioned is 140 times swifter than a cannon ball. If we add to this the many million times increased speed at the

point of Babel, compared with its speed at the point of the equator, or the surface of the earth, its motion would then be almost incalculable. Supposing, however, there had been a heaven, and that these Babel builders had been wise enough, when they had made all the earth into bricks and lime, to have carried the bricks from the foundation of Babel, and stuck them on the other end till they got far enough—unless the earth had lost its motion by changing its shape, they must have been very dexterous fellows that could have jumped into heaven as the point of Babel passed the entrance.

But supposing all these difficulties to be surmounted, a new one would arise when the builders approached so near the heavenly bodies as to feel, more forcibly from that quarter than from the earth, the power of attraction. In this case, men, brick, and mortar, together with all their tools and other materials, would fly off in a direct line to the moon, and forever prevent the completion of this wonderful project. The folly and impossibility of the thing stamp the whole story with a character which ought to make Christians ashamed of calling such nonsense the word of an intelligent god.

As a climax to the absurdity, the book informs us that the almighty maker of heaven and earth came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men were building. This omniscient being could not perceive this where he was. It was necessary to make a journey from heaven to earth in order to discover what plots and conjurations were going on against him. This system of religion will never cease to represent deity as a jealous being, full of apprehension for his safety, and terrified at the designs of those poor feeble mortals of whose existence we are told he was himself the author. Can any man of common sense believe it was necessary for a god to confound the language of any people to prevent an invasion of his celestial dominions? What absurdity is this, and how inconsistent with the perfections of that being who is represented as holding in his hands the sceptre of the universe—as possessed of all power in heaven and in earth, and who humbleth the hearts of man as pleaseth him! One would suppose that the writer of this chapter believed that these Babel builders intended to take heaven by storm; dethrone the Almighty, and seize upon the government of the universe. To add to the foolery, God is made, in his fears of being so served, to conform to this contemptible idea.

As to the project of confounding the language for the purpose of making mankind separate, this (as Mr. Paine has observed) “is altogether inconsistent; because, instead of producing this effect, it would, by increasing their difficulties, render them more necessary to each other, and cause them to keep together. Where could they go to better themselves? Another observation upon this story is, the inconsistency of it with respect to the opinion that the Bible is the word of God, given for the information of mankind; for nothing could so effectually prevent such a word being known by mankind as confounding their language. The people who after this spoke different languages, could no more understand such a word generally, than the builders of Babel could understand one another. It would have been necessary, therefore, had such word ever been given or intended to be given, that the whole earth should be,

as they say it was at first, of one language and of one speech, and that it should never have been confounded."

In the eleven chapters of Genesis which I have examined, there was much matter for comment and reprehension; but in the following six chapters there is, comparatively, little to be found that merits attention. In the beginning of the 18th chapter there is an account of Abraham's hospitality to three travelling gentlemen, whom the heading of the chapter denominates angels. They make some affectionate inquiries about Sarah, Abraham's wife—comfortable assurances are given to her that she should hereafter become the mother of a fine son, and this sets the good old lady a laughing—a momentous affair, indeed—a pretty story to be called the word of God!

We next come to the sulphurous Sodom and Gomorrah. "And the Lord said because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know." Here is another departure from the principles of theism, as taught in the Bible. God is again represented as being ignorant. He had heard a great many reports concerning Sodom and Gomorrah, the truth of which, owing to the distance of his celestial mansion from the earth, he could not well ascertain. He could not tell whether things were altogether so bad as they had been represented, and, therefore, said he, I will go down and make the inquiry myself, and then I shall know. Weak, imperfect man would have been under the necessity of pursuing such a course, in order to reduce doubt to certainty; but to represent an omniscient being as subject to similar imperfections and necessities, is to strip him of the brilliant attributes of divinity, and to reduce him to the human standard. It is, in fact, to annihilate his godhead altogether. A deity never made such a revelation of himself as this, and it is ignorance alone which ascribes it to intelligence.

The remaining part of this chapter consists of a familiar conversation, which is said to have taken place between Jehovah and Abraham, relative to the destruction of Sodom. In this interview, Abraham succeeds in reducing the claims of his god as low as possible; and, in the true spirit of bargaining, really accomplishes the object of making deity promise that he would save the city if ten righteous persons were found in it; whereas the first stipulation was fifty. After this degrading interview, God, it is said, went his way; and Abraham returned unto his place. How feeble, how imperfect must have been their ideas of the almighty ruler of the universe, when they could make such representations concerning his being and his conduct! Like two men standing in the street, holding a conversation about their own affairs, and when they had done, bidding each other "good bye," and then retiring to their houses. Such might have been the god of the Jews; but he falls infinitely short of that splendid being—that dignified character—that eternal existence recognized in the religion of Nature.

The story of Abraham, like that of Moses, and other Bible personages, is after all a mere fiction; for notwithstanding all the endeavors of theologians to give it the appearance of the history of human beings, it has preserved its mythological features with an outline and coloring easy to

he recognized. Abraham, as remarked by Voltaire, "is a name famous in Asia Minor and Arabia, like Thaut among the Egyptians, the first Zoroaster in Persia, Hercules in Greece, Orpheus in Thrace, Odin among the northern nations, and many others known rather by their celebrity than by any authentic history." We are told that Abraham was born in Chaldea, and that he was the son of a poor potter, who earned his bread by making little earthen idols. The Persians also claimed him as their own, and we know that the ancient religion of that people has been called, from time immemorial, *Kish Ibrahim*. Others assert that he was the *Brama* of the Indians. The Arabs regarded him as the founder of Mecca; and Mahomet, in his Koran, speaks of him thus: "Abraham was neither Jew nor Christian; he was an orthodox mussulman; he was not among the number of those that imagine God has colleagues."

It appears, in fact, that the Jews did not call themselves the descendants of Abraham until a very late period, when they had at last established themselves in Palestine. They were strangers, hated and despised by their neighbors, and wished to relieve themselves from the odium heaped on them, by passing for descendants of that Abraham who was so much revered in a great part of Asia, and whose name, which signifies, in more oriental languages than one, *Father of a People*, was so greatly renowned throughout the east long before the Jews existed as a nation—when they had neither town nor laws, nor even a fixed religion. When, therefore, we see an ancient rite or an ancient opinion established in Egypt or Asia, and also among the Jews, it is natural to suppose that this small, newly formed, ignorant, stupid people copied, as well as they were able, the ancient, flourishing, and industrious nations.

To be continued. 405

MISCELLANEOUS.

BIBLICAL ANECDOTES; OR, "THE MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART."

JOAB.

Abner, captain of Saul's host.—2 Samuel, chap. ii. v. 8.

Joab, captain of David's host.—Ver. 17, and chap. viii. v. 16.

David sends a flag of truce, and makes a great feast for Abner, and orders Joab to slay him.—Chap. xxiii. v. 20, 24.

David orders Joab to put Uriah into the front of the battle that he may be slain, and fornicates with his wife.—Chap. 11.

David removes Joab, and appoints Amasa in his stead.—Chap. xvii. ver. 25.

Joab slays Absalom (David's son *by his master's order*).—Chapter xviii. For which

David orders him to kill Amasa, and replaces him in his military office.—Chap. xx.

Catastrophe.—After having given thanks to Jehovah for his manifold mercies, "in making his life so spotless and void of reproach, and for giving him the victory over all his enemies," David dies; and just before

he goes off (having sung one of his psalms) says to Solomon, "Moreover, thou knowest what Joab, the son of Zerniah, did unto the two captains of the hosts of Israel, Abner and Amasa, and unto Absalom my son, and unto Uriah, the Hittite, whom he slew. Do, therefore, according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoary head go down in peace to the grave."—1 Kings, chap. ii. ver. 5 and 6. So Solomon, "being full of the grace of the Lord," orders Joab to the bow string: "for his mercy endureth for ever."

SHIMEI.

"Shimei cursed David."—2 Samuel, chap. xiv. ver. 5. "Therefore, (i. e. because Shimei had joined in David's triumphal procession from Gideon,) David said unto Shimei, the son of Gera, thou shalt not die: and the king swore 'unto him.'"—Chap. xix. ver. 23.

Catastrophe—Scene, David's death bed—David to Solomon.—"And behold, thou hast with thee Shimei, the son of Gera, who cursed me when I went down to Manhanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordon, and I swore unto him by the Lord, saying, I will not put thee to death by the sword. Now, therefore, my son, hold THOU him not guiltless, (for thou art a wise man, and knowest what oughtest to be done unto him,) but his hoar head bring THOU down to the grave WITH BLOOD."—1 Kings, chap. ii. ver. 8 and 9.

SAUL.

Saul "compareth and imagineth the death of" David.—1 Samuel, chap. xviii. David swears to pardon him.—Chap. xix.

Catastrophe.—As a last proof of his "dying in the Lord," David, immediately previous to his joining his friend, Jehovah, in his heaven, orders two of *Saul's sons*, and five of his GRAND CHILDREN, to be hanged: "for his oath to Saul was to spare HIM;" but did not extend to HIS ISSUE, though they were not born at the time of Saul's conspiracy. And the Lord saw it all, and behold, "It was all very good."

The Crusaders.—At the siege of Lavaur, Simon de Montfort had profited by all the progress which the art of war had made in that age. He had himself served in the Holy Land, and there were in his camp a great number of knights who had combated against the Turks and the Greeks, and who had, in the east, acquired the knowledge of the attack and the defence of fortified places. He employed, therefore, to overthrow the walls, ingenious machines, whose introduction was quite recent among the Latins, and which were as yet unknown to the inhabitants of the Pyrennees. The most fearful was that which was called *the cat*. A moveable wooden tower, strongly constructed, was built out of the reach of the besieged. When it was entirely covered with sheep skins with the fur outwards, to guard it from fire, and provided with soldiers at its openings, and on the platform at its summit, it was moved on rollers to the foot of the wall. Its side then opened, and an immense beam, armed with iron hooks, projected like the paw of a cat, shook the wall by reiterated strokes, after the manner of the ancient battering ram, and tore out, and pulled down, the stones which it had loosened. Simon de Montfort had constructed a cat, but the wide ditches of Lavaur pre-

vented him from bringing it near enough to the walls. The crusaders, under the orders of Montfort, labored unceasingly to fill up the ditch, while the inhabitants of Lavaur, who could descend into it by subterranean passages, cleared away each night all that had been thrown in during the day. At last Montfort succeeded in filling the mines with flame and smoke, and thereby prevented the inhabitants from passing into them. The ditches were then speedily filled; the cat was pushed to the foot of the wall; and its terrible paw began to open and enlarge the breach. On the day of the finding of the *holy cross*, the 3d of May, 1211, Montfort judged the breach to be practicable. The crusaders prepared for the assault. The bishops, the abbot of Courdieu, who exercised the functions of vice legate, and all the priests clothed with their pontifical habits, giving themselves to the joy of seeing the carnage begin, sang the hymn *Veni Creator*. The knights mounted the breach. Resistance was impossible; and the only care of Simon de Montfort was to prevent the crusaders from instantly falling upon the inhabitants, and to beseech them rather to make prisoners, that the priests of the living God might not be deprived of their promised joys. "Very soon," continues the monk of Vaux Cernay, "they dragged out of the castle Aimery, lord of Montreal, and other knights, to the number of eighty." The noble count immediately ordered them to be hanged upon the gallows; but, as soon Aimery, the stoutest among them, was hanged, the gallows fell; for, in their great haste, they had not well fixed it in the earth. The count, seeing that this would produce great delay, ordered the rest to be massacred; and the pilgrims, receiving the order with the greatest avidity, very soon massacred them all upon the spot! The lady of the castle, who was sister of Aimery, and an "execrable heretic," was, by the count's order, thrown into the pit, which was filled up with stones. Afterwards, our pilgrims collected the innumerable heretics that the castle contained, and burned them alive with the utmost joy. Open hostilities had not yet commenced between Simon de Montfort and the count of Toulouse, but they followed immediately on the taking of Lavaur. The refusals to send provisions to the besiegers might serve as a pretext, but none was wanted for attacking those who were excommunicated. The castle of Montjoyre was the first place, immediately belonging to the count of Toulouse, before which the crusaders presented themselves; and being abandoned, it was burned and rased from top to bottom by the soldiers of the church. The castle of Cassero afforded them more satisfaction, as it furnished human victims for their sacrifices. It was surrendered on capitulation; and the pilgrims seizing nearly sixty heretics burned them with infinite joy. This is always the phrase employed by the monk who was the witness and panegyrist of the crusade.

Jewish Cabbala.—The highest kind of Talmudic science is that known by the name of Cabbala, a most absurd doctrine of mystical interpretation, which consists in the transportation of the letters composing the words of scripture, assigning to them arithmetical value, and taking each letter as the initial of a word; thus bringing out senses the most recondite and marvellous from the simplest and plainest parts of the text. Such as have become adepts in this occult science are regarded by

the rest of the Jews as a species of demi angelic beings. They arrogate to themselves the title "Possessors of the Name;" pretending that they have received the true mysteries and signification of the name of Jenovah, by which is conceded to them the power of working miracles. That a people generally inclined to yield unbounded credence to the doctrines of such impostors should be in the highest degree superstitious, cannot excite the least surprise. In nothing, however, is this superstition more apparent than in their use of the amulets, which they wear next their bodies and affix to the doors of their houses. These latter are generally inserted in an encasement, covered with glass, and are kissed by the Jews on entering or leaving the house. Such, indeed, is the importance they attach to them, that they firmly believe neither demons, ghosts, nor any power of magic can enter their habitations; and that when they touch the small piece of glass, enclosing the "divine" name, with the tip of their finger, and then stroke their eyes with it thrice, repeating the prayer, "The Almighty preserve me! The Almighty deliver me! The Almighty assist me!" no harm of any kind can befall them. The name Shaddai, or its initial, the Jews use as a talisman almost on every occasion. Even the butcher, when killing an ox, cuts this letter with his knife in all the principal parts of the animal, to prevent any influence from being exerted on them before the purchasers have conveyed them to their houses. Many of the Polish rabbins gain their livelihood by writing talismans, which they sell at an enormous price to the deluded multitude. They also teach them the cabbalistic or hidden meaning of the Psalms, and how to apply them for the prevention or removal of different diseases with which they may be attacked. Thus, the first psalm, written on parchment, and suspended round the neck of a female while in a state of pregnancy, prevents abortion and premature delivery; the second is an antidote for the headache, &c.

Monks.—A multitude of writers have asserted that the monastic state was instituted for the purpose of reviving and perpetuating the purity of morals of the first Christians. St. Jerome himself says, that the life led by the monks of his own times was same as that of the former. But where shall we now look for the primitive perfection? Is it in those magnificent monasteries, that resemble, by the grandeur and splendor of their architecture, the majestic palaces of kings, rather than the humble asylums of innocence and virtue? Is it in those *hospederias* of their monasteries, which are perpetually crowded with wealthy ladies and gentlemen, who, either through devotion for their patron saint, or friendship for the abbot, or prompted by their own interests, go to pay their court to him, and spend in those delightful retreats a day of mirth and amusement; the whole forming the strongest contrast with the deep silence that reigns in the interior of the cloisters? Or is it in those numerous country houses, and commodious town dwellings, which are the ordinary residences of their proctors, who are incessantly watching over the interests of the community, putting in claims the most distant, and involving people of slender fortunes in long and expensive law suits, frequently without a glimpse of right on their side, in order to accomplish their own objects? In surveying one by one the innumerable monasteries in Spain,

we shall find that even the wealthiest grandee cannot compete with them in objects of mere luxury: such, doubtless, are those thick, shady, and neatly lopped plantations which generally surround their convents; those interior extensive gardens, thickly studded with all kinds of fruit trees, and offering to the sight a scene no less beautiful than useful and agreeable; and lastly, those reservoirs filled with eels, tench, trouts, crawfish, and fresh water tortoises, which, though seldom appearing on the tables of their refectories, are to be found in those of their cells, and particularly in that of the *Senor Abad*, who never fails to regale his guests and protectors with the choicest of these dainties. But what shall we say of those capacious and numerous granaries, which seem every moment ready to sink under the immense weight of the corn collected from their lands and tithes? of these extensive subterraneous caves, in which the most exquisite wines of Europe are annually laid up in prodigious and almost incredible quantities? of those magnificent stables, always well furnished with horses and mules of the best breed, height, and value? of those extensive pasture grounds and rich meadows, which are stocked with thousands of all sorts of cattle? and, lastly, of the commerce they make of all these articles, which, if not quite in accordance with their vows of poverty, is at least sufficiently lucrative to compensate for the sacrifice of principle?

Origin of the word Bigot.—The word bigot is derived by Camden, from the following circumstances: When Rollo, Duke of Normandy received Gisla, the daughter of Charles the Simple, king of France, in marriage, together with the investiture of that dukedom, he would not submit to kiss Charles's foot: and when his friends urged him by all means to comply with that ceremony, he made answer in the English tongue, "Ne se, by God," i. e. *Not so, by God*. Upon which, the king and his courtiers deriding him, and corruptly repeating his answer, called him *bigot*, from whence the Normans were called *bigodi*, or *bigots*.

Ubiquity.—It is curious to hear priests talk of the *ubiquity* of the Deity, and yet at the same time furiously deny his *material* existence at all? For if the Deity is spirit, the Deity is nothing, or a nonentity; for a spirit is nothing which can neither be described or pencilled. Therefore there is no God (according to their dogmas) unless it can be supposed there is an immaterial *something* floating about, which however occupies no space, has no parts, no solidity, extension nor any other properties of matter, and yet this nothing is something, and possesses volition to real action. Priests only make this problem; they alone can solve it. However they may reason away any difficulties of this kind, they can never, with any face, deny there is a *ubiquity* of priests who cringe, fawn and tyrannize; that there is a *ubiquity* of spies and informers, who live by calumny and perjury; a *ubiquity* of magistrates who support them; and lastly, a *ubiquity* of gold which supports them all.—*Pigott*.

Te Deum.—A hymn of praise and thanksgiving offered up by Christians to the God of Peace, in celebration of those massacres called

victories. I have studied the English people thoroughly, and I verily believe they are very rapidly indeed merging towards popery; nor should I be astonished to see the English church a real church militant, its priests at the head of armies carrying the bloody banners of war into the churches, to be consecrated at a polluted altar, and an Auto-de-se to crown the whole.---*Pigott.*

Dedications.—Many authors and editors have the custom in Spain to dedicate books to the Almighty, to his angels, to his saints, and even to those of their images that are in reputation of being miraculous. A volume of Calderon's Autos Sacramentales is by a printer dedicated to the patriarcha San Juan de Dois, though he was no patriarch at all, but a bookseller of Grenada, as the dedicatory letter informs us, who in a fit of devotion threw into the fire all the books he had in his shop, those of piety only excepted. That San Juan (or St. John) was the founder of an order which professes ignorance. It was natural for a man who burnt his books to think of forming such an institution.

Drunkenness expels reason, drowns the memory, defaces beauty, diminishes strength, inflames the blood, causes internal, external, and incurable wounds; is a witch to the senses, a devil to the soul, a thief to the purse, the beggar's companion, a wife's woe, and children's sorrow; makes a strong man weak, and a wise man a fool. He is worse than a beast, and is a self murderer, who drinks to others' good health and robs himself of his own.

Religion expels reason, destroys the memory, drowns the understanding, diminishes health, inflames the passions, causes massacres, robberies, and villainies innumerable; is a thief to the purse, the dupe's companion, the support of impostors, the parent of priestcraft, a foe to learning, and the friend of tyrants; is the boast of fools, and the wise man's jest. And he is either rogue or fool, or a compound of both; who, having the history of the world and the experience of past ages before him, denies that religion is a pest and a most disgraceful and most oppressive burden to mankind.

TO OUR PATRONS.

As one number more will complete the first year of the publication of the *Correspondent*, we think it necessary to call the attention of our subscribers to the conditions on which we commenced the publication, namely: that those residing in the country should pay one year (\$3) in advance, besides postage; and those residing in town, six months in advance. These terms, we regret to say, have, in several instances, not been complied with as to the current year, which renders it necessary that we should *discontinue* sending the paper, not only to those who are now in arrear, but to those who may not in future conform to the original conditions.

We should hope that no one has subscribed to the *Correspondent* but such as wished to give it *vital* support; and, as we have neither eccle-

siastical treasures nor benefices on which to draw, we trust that every well-wisher to the cause will be prompt in affording us that aid which is so essential to the permanency of the establishment. Our own personal labors have as yet been gratuitous; but, judging from the great interest felt for our success, and relying on the exertions of the friends of liberal principles to extend the circulation of the *Correspondent*, we have no doubt that we shall be ultimately remunerated. Meanwhile, if city subscribers were to pay their subscriptions for one year at our office, it would save the expense of collecting, materially promote the prosperity of the concern, and greatly facilitate our labors.

We have a variety of interesting pieces on file, with which we intend to commence our third volume; among which are, "the important Examination of the Scriptures, by Lord Bolingbroke," (originally written in French;) "the Doubts of the Infidels;" "the God of the Jews, or Jehovah Unveiled;" "Watson Refuted," by the author of "the Origin of Christianity, or Truth drawn from Fables;" "the Life of David," &c. And should our encouragement be equal to what we think we are warranted to anticipate, it is our intention to print the *Correspondent* on a finer paper than that on which it is now issued. We have had such ample proofs of good feeling on the part of those with whom we are associated in the great cause of mental emancipation, that we cannot allow ourselves to doubt of their determination to do every thing that is just and necessary to promote an object of such vital importance.

Paine's Birthday.—The Free Press Association intend to celebrate the anniversary of the birthday of THOMAS PAINE, by a public dinner, on the 29th instant. Further particulars in our next.

Lectures on Science.—The next lecture on science will be delivered in the Hall of the *Free Press Association*, William street, on Sunday, (tomorrow,) the 13th instant, at 11 o'clock forenoon, precisely. The theological lectures, as usual, at half past 2 o'clock P. M.

Books for sale at the office of the *Correspondent*:

Ecce Homo! or a Critical Inquiry into the History of the Life of Jesus of Nazareth—75 cents in boards.

The People's Rights Reclaimed; being an Exposition of the unconstitutionality of the Law of the State of New York compelling the observance of a religious Sabbath—25 cents.

View of the Metaphysical and Physiological Arguments in favor of Materialism—25 cents.

The Scripture Doctrine of Materialism—25 cents.

Paine's Theological Works, complete, 8vo., bound and gilt—\$2; bds. \$1.50.

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